



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Monthly Wholesale Trade

Sales and Inventories

June 1999

BW/99-6

Issued August 1999

MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE: SALES AND INVENTORIES JUNE 1999

Notice of Revised Data: Monthly wholesale data were revised based on the preliminary results of the 1997 Census of Wholesale Trade. The Annual Benchmark Report for Wholesale Trade showing revised data was released on August 6, 1999.

Sales. June 1999 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were \$228.1 billion, up 1.9 percent (+/-0.6%) from the revised May level and were 8.3 percent (+/-1.2%) above the June 1998 level. The May preliminary estimate was revised upward \$0.7 billion or 0.3 percent. June sales of durable goods increased 1.3 percent from last month (+/-0.8%) and were 6.9 percent (+/-1.7%) above last year. Compared to last month, sales of electrical goods increased 2.1 percent and motor vehicles and automotive equipment grew 1.7 percent. June sales of nondurable goods increased 2.6 percent (+/-0.9%) from May and were up 9.9 percent (+/-1.2%) from last year. Sales of chemicals and allied products were up 4.4 percent from last month and farm-product raw materials were up 4.3 percent.

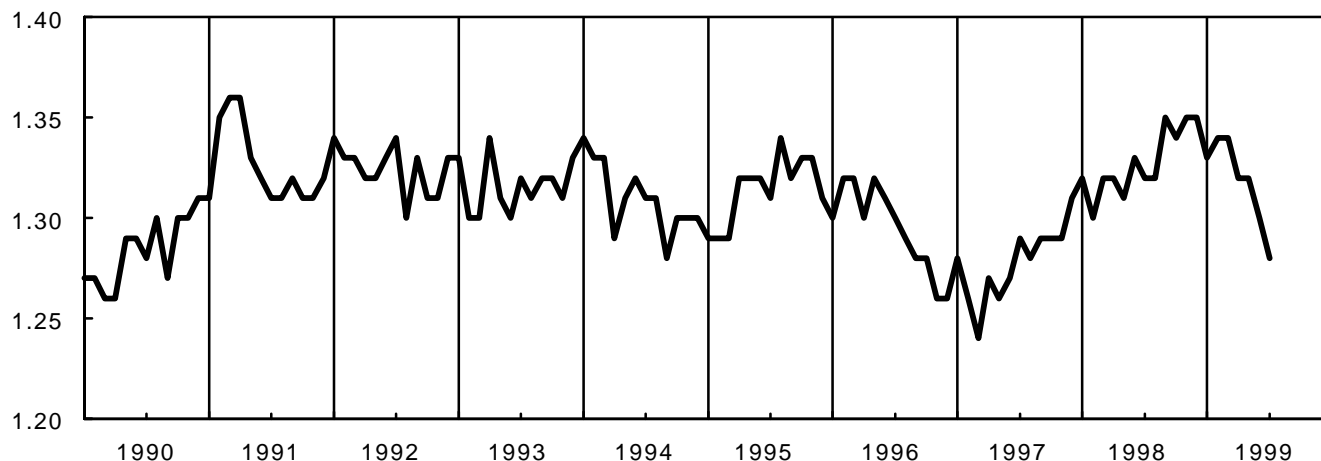
Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variations but not for price changes, were \$291.0 billion at the end of June, up 0.3 percent (+/-0.4%) from the

revised May level and were 4.3 percent (+/-0.9%) above June 1998. The May preliminary estimate was revised downward \$0.5 billion or 0.2 percent. End-of-month inventories of durable goods increased 0.5 percent (+/-0.5%) from last month and were 4.8 percent (+/-1.4%) above June 1998. Among nondurable goods, inventories of petroleum and petroleum products increased 6.3 percent from May, while inventories of apparel, piece goods, and notions fell 4.8 percent.

Inventories/Sales Ratio. The June inventories/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data, was 1.28. The June 1998 ratio was 1.32.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling variability. A discussion of the reliability of the data and general survey methodology appears in BW/98-A Current Business Reports.

Monthly Inventories/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1990 to 1999
(Data adjusted for seasonal and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)



Monthly Wholesale Trade for July is scheduled to be released September 8, 1999 at 10:00 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Service Sector Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233, or call Ronald Pienzykoski, 301-457-2779 or 301-457-2764. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

This report is available on day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board (202-482-1986). The data are also available on the Internet - <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/mwts.html>.

Table 1. Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Inventories/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1999 and 1998

[In millions of dollars]

SIC ¹ code	Kind of Business	Sales						Inventories						Inventories/sales		
		Monthly			Percent change			Monthly			Percent change			ratios		
		Jun. 1999 (p)	May 1999 (r)	Jun. 1998 (r)	Jun./ May	May/ Apr.	Jun. 99 Jun. 98	Jun. 1999 (p)	May 1999 (r)	Jun. 1998 (r)	Jun./ May	May/ Apr.	Jun. 99 Jun. 98	Jun. 1999 (p)	May 1999 (r)	Jun. 1998 (r)
Adjusted ²																
	U.S. Total	228,123	223,909	210,660	1.9	1.8	8.3	290,975	290,216	278,881	0.3	0.2	4.3	1.28	1.30	1.32
50	Durable	121,598	120,055	113,739	1.3	1.6	6.9	190,718	189,689	182,044	0.5	0.6	4.8	1.57	1.58	1.60
501	Automotive	18,825	18,519	16,530	1.7	-0.2	13.9	27,629	27,590	25,349	0.1	1.4	9.0	1.47	1.49	1.53
502	Furniture	4,132	4,063	4,058	1.7	1.5	1.8	6,053	5,958	5,956	1.6	0.6	1.6	1.46	1.47	1.47
503	Lumber	8,780	8,638	7,519	1.6	2.2	16.8	8,688	8,681	8,301	0.1	1.8	4.7	0.99	1.00	1.10
504	Prof. equip.	22,848	22,591	21,468	1.1	3.8	6.4	25,465	25,273	27,174	0.8	1.2	-6.3	1.11	1.12	1.27
505	Metals	7,579	7,568	8,065	0.1	-0.7	-6.0	12,965	12,940	13,249	0.2	0.6	-2.1	1.71	1.71	1.64
506	Electrical	19,396	18,989	17,738	2.1	0.7	9.3	26,562	26,397	25,474	0.6	1.3	4.3	1.37	1.39	1.44
507	Hardware	6,828	6,956	6,602	-1.8	1.2	3.4	13,260	13,196	13,238	0.5	-0.4	0.2	1.94	1.90	2.01
508	Machinery	20,615	20,257	20,286	1.8	1.4	1.6	52,001	51,524	46,580	0.9	-0.5	11.6	2.52	2.54	2.30
509	Other Durable	12,595	12,474	11,473	1.0	4.0	9.8	18,095	18,130	16,723	-0.2	0.5	8.2	1.44	1.45	1.46
51	Nondurable	106,525	103,854	96,921	2.6	2.0	9.9	100,257	100,527	96,837	-0.3	-0.5	3.5	0.94	0.97	1.00
511	Paper	8,166	8,194	7,560	-0.3	4.2	8.0	9,871	9,682	9,343	2.0	0.6	5.7	1.21	1.18	1.24
512	Drugs	12,372	12,090	10,095	2.3	1.0	22.6	17,254	16,768	14,266	2.9	2.3	20.9	1.39	1.39	1.41
513	Apparel	7,816	7,915	7,046	-1.3	4.7	10.9	11,317	11,887	12,634	-4.8	-0.8	-10.4	1.45	1.50	1.79
514	Groceries	30,005	30,156	28,882	-0.5	1.0	3.9	17,784	17,963	17,277	-1.0	-0.7	2.9	0.59	0.60	0.60
515	Farm-products	9,006	8,636	8,750	4.3	6.4	2.9	10,680	11,057	9,862	-3.4	0.3	8.3	1.19	1.28	1.13
516	Chemicals	4,480	4,292	4,470	4.4	0.5	0.2	4,768	4,765	4,725	0.1	-1.8	0.9	1.06	1.11	1.06
517	Petroleum	12,238	11,932	10,315	2.6	4.5	18.6	4,113	3,869	4,377	6.3	-2.4	-6.0	0.34	0.32	0.42
518	Alcohol	5,570	5,449	4,966	2.2	-0.1	12.2	6,438	6,745	5,886	-4.6	4.4	9.4	1.16	1.24	1.19
519	Other Nondur.	16,872	15,190	14,837	11.1	-0.6	13.7	18,032	17,791	18,467	1.4	-4.4	-2.4	1.07	1.17	1.24
Not Adjusted														Sales to date		
														1999		1998
	U.S. Total	237,521	221,805	220,052	7.1	-0.3	7.9	287,593	288,339	275,757	-0.3	-1.1	4.3	1,307,802		1,248,985
50	Durable	128,407	117,127	120,596	9.6	-1.6	6.5	191,554	191,300	182,801	0.1	0.5	4.8	699,627		669,484
501	Automotive	20,067	18,556	17,588	8.1	-4.4	14.1	27,325	27,756	25,070	-1.6	0.5	9.0	110,463		99,719
502	Furniture	4,190	3,937	4,188	6.4	-3.2	0.0	6,168	5,934	6,063	3.9	2.8	1.7	23,448		23,332
503	Lumber	9,877	8,793	8,369	12.3	2.1	18.0	8,983	8,924	8,567	0.7	1.8	4.9	49,162		43,532
504	Prof. equip.	24,287	21,123	22,842	15.0	-0.6	6.3	25,338	25,172	27,011	0.7	0.0	-6.2	129,554		124,825
505	Metals	8,003	7,447	8,476	7.5	-5.3	-5.6	13,004	12,992	13,289	0.1	0.5	-2.1	46,698		49,477
506	Electrical	20,075	18,040	18,323	11.3	-1.1	9.6	27,120	26,555	26,009	2.1	2.3	4.3	109,210		102,369
507	Hardware	7,545	6,852	7,328	10.1	0.6	3.0	13,459	13,513	13,423	-0.4	-0.1	0.3	39,868		37,744
508	Machinery	21,831	20,541	21,929	6.3	-3.3	-0.4	52,261	52,451	46,813	-0.4	-0.7	11.6	121,883		122,498
509	Other Durable	12,532	11,838	11,553	5.9	2.4	8.5	17,896	18,003	16,556	-0.6	1.5	8.1	69,341		65,988
51	Nondurable	109,114	104,678	99,456	4.2	1.2	9.7	96,039	97,039	92,956	-1.0	-4.3	3.3	608,175		579,501
511	Paper	8,166	7,661	7,530	6.6	-2.1	8.4	9,693	9,479	9,175	2.3	-2.3	5.6	47,084		43,583
512	Drugs	12,323	11,413	10,095	8.0	-5.6	22.1	16,685	16,013	13,795	4.2	-2.9	20.9	70,133		59,776
513	Apparel	7,777	6,593	6,947	18.0	-9.1	11.9	11,521	11,590	12,849	-0.6	0.6	-10.3	44,684		42,595
514	Groceries	30,785	31,121	29,662	-1.1	5.9	3.8	17,553	17,855	17,052	-1.7	0.0	2.9	175,681		168,899
515	Farm-products	8,511	8,239	8,304	3.3	7.6	2.5	8,213	9,177	7,594	-10.5	-16.0	8.2	50,119		54,516
516	Chemicals	4,915	4,374	4,863	12.4	0.4	1.1	4,744	4,832	4,711	-1.8	-0.6	0.7	26,398		27,892
517	Petroleum	12,091	11,825	10,202	2.2	0.7	18.5	3,936	3,869	4,193	1.7	-1.6	-6.1	64,979		60,773
518	Alcohol	6,172	5,558	5,458	11.0	1.9	13.1	6,528	6,522	5,951	0.1	1.7	9.7	31,073		28,559
519	Other Nondur.	18,374	17,894	16,395	2.7	1.4	12.1	17,166	17,702	17,636	-3.0	-10.1	-2.7	98,024		92,908

p Preliminary estimate. r Revised.

1 For a full description of the SIC codes shown above, see the "1987 Standard Industrial Classification Manual" or the Current Business Reports "Annual Benchmark Report for Wholesale Trade" publication.

2 Data adjusted for seasonal variations and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. See Table 3 for seasonal adjustment factors used.

Table 2. Coefficients of Variation and Standard Error for Sales and Inventories

SIC code	Kind of Business	Coefficients of variation for level (x 100)				Standard error for trend				Coefficients of variation for level (x 100)		Standard error for trend
		Preliminary estimates		Final estimates		Ratio of two consecutive months		Year-to-year estimates		Cumulative sales estimates		Current year cumulative
		Sales	Inv	Sales	Inv	Sales	Inv	Sales	Inv	Current year	Previous year	to previous year cumulative
		Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median	Median			
	U.S. Total	1.1	1.4	1.1	1.3	0.4	0.2	0.8	0.9	1.2	1.1	0.7
50	Durable	1.8	2.4	1.9	2.3	0.6	0.3	1.1	1.0	1.8	2.2	1.0
501	Automotive	4.3	4.8	4.2	4.8	1.0	0.8	2.2	2.9	4.4	5.1	2.1
502	Furniture	6.5	7.8	6.4	7.7	2.0	1.0	2.8	2.6	6.1	6.7	1.6
503	Lumber	5.5	5.3	5.2	5.3	1.3	0.7	2.0	2.5	5.7	5.7	1.4
504	Prof. equip.	6.0	7.0	5.7	7.0	1.3	0.7	3.2	2.1	6.6	5.5	2.9
505	Metals	5.0	10.0	5.0	9.9	1.1	0.8	1.6	3.0	4.9	4.7	0.9
506	Electrical	5.6	6.9	5.7	6.7	1.4	0.6	2.3	2.3	5.6	6.2	2.1
507	Hardware	5.4	6.3	5.6	6.1	1.2	0.7	1.6	2.1	5.5	5.7	1.2
508	Machinerv	6.3	6.6	6.3	6.5	2.1	0.6	2.6	2.0	6.0	6.8	2.1
509	Other Durable	6.3	9.2	6.4	8.9	1.6	0.9	2.1	2.3	6.4	6.1	1.8
51	Nondurable	1.9	2.2	1.9	2.2	0.6	0.5	1.0	1.3	1.9	1.7	0.6
511	Paper	5.0	5.1	4.9	5.1	1.1	0.6	2.0	1.9	5.2	5.0	1.0
512	Drugs	6.3	4.9	6.3	4.8	1.0	0.6	2.4	1.6	6.4	6.9	1.2
513	Apparel	5.1	7.6	4.9	7.5	2.2	1.1	2.9	2.5	4.6	4.6	1.6
514	Groceries	3.0	4.9	3.0	5.1	0.7	0.6	1.1	1.2	3.0	3.0	0.8
515	Farm-products	6.8	8.6	6.6	8.4	2.3	1.6	2.8	4.2	6.4	5.6	2.3
516	Chemicals	5.6	6.3	5.6	6.4	1.4	0.7	2.0	2.1	5.2	5.8	1.2
517	Petroleum	6.9	14.1	6.7	14.3	0.9	1.4	1.7	1.8	7.1	7.2	1.3
518	Alcohol	6.3	8.7	6.3	8.7	1.5	1.3	1.5	15.7	6.1	6.4	1.3
519	Other Nondur.	6.4	7.6	6.4	7.6	1.9	1.2	4.2	4.1	6.4	5.6	2.9

Note: The median measures of variability are based on the most recent 12 months of data

Sample Design and Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey: sampling and nonsampling.

Sampling errors occur because observations are made on a sample, not on the entire population, and different samples could have led to different estimates. Standard errors and coefficients of variation, as calculated for this report, are measures of sampling variation. The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is up 1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$ or $\pm 1.5\%$, and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to $+2.7\%$. If the interval contains 0, it cannot be stated with certainty whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$ (the estimated value).

Nonsampling errors are usually attributed to many possible sources: (1) coverage error - failure to accurately represent all population units in the sample, (2) inability to obtain

information about all sample cases, (3) response errors, possibly due to definitional difficulties or misreporting, (4) mistakes in recording or coding the data obtained, and (5) other errors of collection or processing, or in imputing for missing or inconsistent data. Coverage error has an effect on the accuracy of estimates for this survey to the extent that the administrative records system, which forms the basis of our survey universe frame, does not contain all legal businesses. A major source of nonsampling error in the published estimates is due to the need to impute data for nonrespondents and for late and inconsistent reports. For all kinds of businesses combined, imputed data amount to about 31 percent of the total monthly wholesale sales estimates and 32 percent of the total monthly wholesale inventories estimates.

Nonsampling errors also occur in complete censuses. Although no direct measures of these errors have been obtained, precautionary steps were taken in all phases of the collection, processing, and tabulation of the data to minimize their influence.

Official Business

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Table 3. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of Business	Sales						Inventories					
		1999					1998	1999					1998
		Jul.	Jun.r	May r	Apr.	Mar.	Jun.r	Jul.	Jun.r	May r	Apr.	Mar.	Jun.r
	U.S. Total¹	0.989	1.042	0.991	1.010	1.077	1.045	0.993	0.986	0.994	1.006	1.009	0.985
50	Durable	0.994	1.057	0.976	1.007	1.082	1.060	1.011	1.002	1.009	1.009	1.003	1.002
501	Automotive	1.003	1.066	1.002	1.046	1.120	1.064	0.993	0.989	1.006	1.015	1.017	0.989
502	Furniture	0.968	1.014	0.969	1.016	1.048	1.032	1.022	1.019	0.996	0.974	0.984	1.018
503	Lumber	1.067	1.125	1.018	1.019	1.017	1.113	1.017	1.034	1.028	1.028	1.021	1.032
504	Prof. equip.	0.980	1.063	0.935	0.976	1.102	1.064	1.011	0.995	0.996	1.007	0.999	0.994
505	Metals	0.964	1.056	0.984	1.031	1.108	1.051	1.011	1.003	1.004	1.005	1.011	1.003
506	Electrical	0.996	1.035	0.950	0.967	1.071	1.033	1.027	1.021	1.006	0.996	0.985	1.021
507	Hardware	1.069	1.105	0.985	0.991	0.986	1.110	1.001	1.015	1.024	1.021	1.011	1.014
508	Machinery	0.977	1.059	1.014	1.063	1.113	1.081	1.011	1.005	1.018	1.020	1.009	1.005
509	Other Durable	0.956	0.995	0.949	0.964	1.048	1.007	1.027	0.989	0.993	0.983	0.966	0.990
51	Nondurable	0.988	1.028	1.009	1.015	1.068	1.029	0.960	0.956	0.965	1.009	1.018	0.956
511	Paper	0.965	1.000	0.935	0.996	1.063	0.996	1.000	0.982	0.979	1.008	1.005	0.982
512	Drugs	0.964	0.996	0.944	1.010	1.070	1.000	0.989	0.967	0.955	1.006	1.004	0.967
513	Apparel	1.056	0.995	0.833	0.960	1.131	0.986	1.032	1.018	0.975	0.962	0.962	1.017
514	Groceries	1.020	1.026	1.032	0.984	1.052	1.027	0.998	0.987	0.994	0.987	0.982	0.987
515	Farm-products	0.883	0.945	0.954	0.943	1.066	0.949	0.749	0.769	0.830	0.991	1.091	0.770
516	Chemicals	0.990	1.097	1.019	1.020	1.067	1.088	0.999	0.995	1.014	1.002	1.006	0.997
517	Petroleum	0.970	0.988	0.991	1.028	1.020	0.989	0.971	0.957	1.000	0.992	0.970	0.958
518	Alcohol	1.034	1.108	1.020	1.000	1.011	1.099	1.020	1.014	0.967	0.993	0.998	1.011
519	Other Nondur.	0.978	1.089	1.178	1.154	1.082	1.105	0.944	0.952	0.995	1.058	1.080	0.955

r Revised

1 Adjusted sales and inventories data shown in Table 1 are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

Note: The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through the current month preliminary estimates.

